

Town of Voluntown

Planning & Zoning Commission

Voluntown Town Hall

Thursday December 19, 2019

Special Meeting (rescheduled from the 17th)

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Scott Davidson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

- Members Present: Scott Davidson, Bob Panko, David Nieminen, and Alternate Members John Savage, Max Hollowell and Judith Allik.
- Members Absent: Tom Sweet and David Hartman

2. **Seating of Alternates:** Alternate Members Max Hollowell and John Savage were seated as voting members.

3. **Public Hearing:** Draft of Voluntown 2020-2030 Plan of Conservation and Development revised 9/11/2019 as proposed by the Voluntown Planning and Zoning Commission

Chairman S. Davidson reviewed the order of the Public Hearing. Order will be 1) Presentation of Draft POCD by Jim Larkin, NECOG; 2) Presentation by Staff; 3) Questions from the Commission; 4) Citizens' comments; 5) Questions from the Commission.

Chairman Davidson noted that this meetings notice was published on December 3, 2019 and December 10, 2019.

Jim Larkin from NECCOG presented the POCD and offered some suggested edits to improve certain sections.

Citizens' Comments:

The following people offered general comments:

Jack Wessa, EDC Chairman (844 Pendleton Hill Road) spoke thanking the Commission members for all their hard work. He expressed some concerns about the POCD not addressing the issue of how to bring more businesses to town – particularly tourism related. He stated that Voluntown needed to partner with the State and look into the possibility of having small Hydro-electric units on some of our dams to be used to power our municipal buildings.

Jim McBride (150 Bennett Road) spoke thanking the Commission on their hard work and for including more language about the town's water resources.

Juliet Hodge, (622 Pendleton Hill Road) also acknowledged the work it takes to write a POCD but expressed "huge concerns" about the draft plan she was sent a few weeks ago to review as the Town planner in the neighboring municipality of North Stonington. She stated that she had actually edited the Plan for the Commission fixing the numerous typos and awkward wording and format and had updated the demographic data and charts, among other things. A copy of the edited POCD was emailed to the Chairman prior the meeting to be included in the record of the Public Hearing along with the Comments she submitted at the prior meeting in November. She stated that she knew the Town was late getting the POCD approved, but that the Commission could request an extension from the State.

Tracy Logan, 1st Selectman, stated that this had been taken care of already, so no applications for funding would be affected if the Commission did not approve the POCD tonight.

J. Hodge noted that the draft POCD the NECOG provided lacked a Vision statement and Future Land Use Plan as required by Statute and that it was impossible to write goals without a vision. She asked that the changes she presented be accepted and that the Commission spend a little more time fixing the goals and articulating an actual vision. She offered to help with this work for free.

Tracy Logan, 1st First Selectman, spoke thanking the Commission for their tireless hours and years of work on the POCD and commended them for their dedication to the project. She also commented that she was disappointed about the lack of public involvement during the process.

Mark Simmons, (84 Hightop Hill) spoke about in reference to sections about Economic Development noting that the Plan did not mention what kind of businesses the town was trying to attract. He also noted that it did not address issues regarding recreation, specifically facilities maintenance and improvements, which in his opinion are in poor condition. He suggested creating a renovation plan.

Commission remarks:

J. Allik raised a concern that the issue of declining population was not addressed, and wanted to know what the Town's vision was on how to attract more people/families to Town. She suggested the Plan should promote the Town as a great place for young families to come live and raise their children.

Chairman Davidson thanked all for their patience and input and asked for a motion to close the Public Hearing,

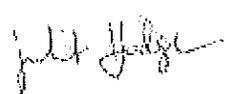
**A motion was made and seconded (D. Neiminen / M. Hollowell) to close the Public Hearing at 8:15PM.
MOTION PASSED**

4. New Business and possible action on the 2020/2030 POCD:

Chairman Davidson acknowledged the points that were brought up during the Public Hearing and wished that they had been brought up 3 years prior. He spoke of a few grammatical errors that needed addressing and asked that the newly elected Commission members be added to the Acknowledgments page. The Commission discussed different options with respect to waiting to adopt so that changes could be made, or adopting now and amending later. Bob Panko commented that the plan can be amended in the future and he thought we should get a committee together to do so. J. Allik noted her concerns with the grammatical errors and encouraged us to get them fixed before submitting to the State. Planner J. Larkin was instructed to fix obvious grammar errors.

Chairman Davidson asked for Motion to adopt the Plan. **Motion was made and seconded (M. Hollowell / D. Nieminen) to adopt the 2020/2030 Plan of Conservation Development. MOTION PASSED**

Motion was made and seconded **(M. Hollowell / B. Panko)** to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:45pm.
MOTION PASSED.



Scott Davidson, Chairman

Marc R. Ledoux Sr. Recording Secretary

(Revised by Juliet Hodge, Recording Secretary)